

English Bicknor CE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115621
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338623
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Rodwell
Headteacher	David Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
School address	English Bicknor Coleford GL16 7PG
Telephone number	01594 860367
Fax number	01594 860367
Email address	head@englishbicknor.gloucs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Inspection number	338623

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. He observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, relevant documentation and teachers' planning. Inspectors received and read questionnaires from parents (38), pupils in Key Stage 2 (27) and staff (6), all of which helped inform the inspection process.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2
- standards in writing throughout the school
- provision and standards in information and communication technology.

Information about the school

English Bicknor is a small village primary school. It shares its site with a privately run nursery, which opened in September 2009. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen slightly since the last inspection in 2006. There are an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the school as it has a reputation locally for helping these pupils. All pupils are of a White British heritage. Arrangements for the Early Years Foundation Stage varies year on year according to the number of children; currently the 11 children at this stage are taught in a discrete Reception class. The school has recently been awarded International School status and has achieved phase four of the Healthy Schools scheme.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

English Bicknor is a good school and is very successful in creating a caring and supportive environment for its pupils. They respond positively and clearly enjoy their school, taking part enthusiastically in the many learning opportunities on offer. The school has a good reputation locally for enabling pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve their potential. As a result of the outstanding care, support and guidance all pupils receive and the good teaching, all pupils make good progress overall, irrespective of their starting points or capabilities.

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised by its last inspection, as well as generally improving the quality of education provided. It has refined its target setting processes, so that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. The tracking system, backed by detailed assessments, enables teachers to ensure work is well matched to pupils' needs and that their progress is closely monitored. The school has also improved provision for information and communication technology considerably, so that pupils have made very good progress in the subject over the last three years and standards are above average. The school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and leaders have a clear and effective commitment to improving provision and raising standards. These factors show that the school has a good capacity for sustaining further development.

National test results vary because of the small cohorts and significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs, but attainment is broadly average overall. Students' attainment in reading and science is currently above average. Standards in mathematics and writing are average, although pupils are making good progress in writing given their weaker starting points. Pupils do not have a rich vocabulary and their writing shows a lack of imagination and variety. The school acknowledges that the mathematics curriculum through the school has not been sufficiently well adapted to provide appropriate challenge for all students. It has recently reorganised the mathematics curriculum, but this has not yet resulted in improved standards. Pupils make a considerable and positive contribution to the school and village communities. Older pupils organise keep-fit sessions before school and games at break times. Most pupils are well aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise.

Relationships throughout the school are warm and cordial. The headteacher sets the tone by exhibiting a high degree of concern for all pupils, especially the most vulnerable. All pupils spoken to confirmed that they felt safe in school and several commented, 'This is like one big happy family.' These views are supported by the vast majority of parents. Good links with the church, village community, outside agencies and local schools provide pupils with extended learning experiences such as the work they are doing with

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

the Forestry Commission.

Teachers ensure that the pupils' time in school is enjoyable and rewarding. The youngest children take part in lessons with enthusiasm and play games with excitement. Older pupils say they really enjoy their work, especially in art and music. Behaviour is good in classes and during playtime, and pupils show respect for adults and each other. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is also demonstrated by the good levels of attendance and punctuality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics at both key stages by further refining the programme of study so that it meets the need of pupils more precisely.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing at both key stages by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their imaginative skills and thereby widen their vocabulary choices.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

It is clear from the lessons observed during the inspection that pupils develop good learning habits and attitudes as they move up through the school. They enjoy learning and collaborate effectively when working in pairs and groups. In class, pupils listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. Most express their views clearly, drawing appropriately on the subject matter of the lesson to support their opinion.

Small year groups make statistical analysis of test results difficult, but generally standards have been maintained around the national averages for a number of years. Pupils are making good progress overall in all subjects except mathematics, where progress is satisfactory. Although good progress is made in writing, pupils' creative writing is constrained by some limitations to their vocabulary and use of imagination. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because of the well-targeted support they receive from teachers and assistants.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and they are developing a better appreciation of the wider world through the extra-curricular activities provided by the school, although sometimes their perceptions are rather limited. Relationships between pupils are good and pupils support each other well in class. The school council make a positive contribution to the life of the school and pupils' views influence decisions effecting school improvement. Pupils are active in raising funds for various projects, such as Christian Aid. They are enthusiastic about healthy eating and healthy snacks and they have grown and cooked the produce from their allotments. Pupils' skills for their future economic well-being are merely satisfactory overall, although they have good reading and computer skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers effectively engage pupils in learning, using a wide range of different techniques, including the use of interactive whiteboards and other visual aids. Planning is detailed and builds well on previous learning. The management of behaviour is good, resulting in high levels of concentration and an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Very occasionally, the pace of lessons slows and when this happens, a few pupils lose concentration. Teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and make good use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking. Systems for assessment are good and effective use is made of assessment information and marking to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is kept under review and has been adapted to the mixed age class taught in the school. However, the mathematics scheme of work is still being adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. There are good links made between subjects, supported by a good number of interesting and exciting extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is enhanced by valuable links with local organisations, and pupils very much enjoyed helping organise the village fete. A well-run breakfast club provides a good range of activities for pupils, and after-school clubs are well attended.

All pupils spoken to said they felt very well supported by the school and know to whom they could go if they had a problem. They feel safe and know their concerns will receive sympathetic support. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

met well by close liaison between teachers, support staff and the special needs coordinator. Effective use is made of outside agencies to support learning. The school has made outstanding provision for pupils' care, support and guidance and this has led to a good local reputation for successfully dealing with pupils who have had poor learning experiences in the past or have quite severe physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The educational direction of the school is firmly rooted in the desire to improve provision and raise standards in a caring and supportive environment. Offering equality of opportunity to all pupils and rigorously monitoring the progress of all is at the heart of the school's work. These ambitions, driven by the headteacher, are shared among staff and the wider school community. Governing body meetings are conducted effectively and there is evidence from the minutes that the professional management of the school is both supported and challenged where necessary. The governing body has been diligent in ensuring the school meets statutory requirements, and systems for safeguarding and protecting pupils are strong. However, governors recognise that more visits to the school would be helpful to inform their role and that recent monitoring of provision has not been as systematic as it should be.

The school's relationship with parents is cordial and effective. Parents are provided with a wide range of information, including the school's online intranet and website. They also appreciate the detailed and informative reports on their children's progress. The school has good relationships with other schools in its cluster, and the joint events in which they have participated have benefited the school significantly. There are also good links with the secondary school to which pupils go after their time at English Bicknor School, which develop pupils' confidence in moving on to the next phase of their education. The school has good links with schools in France and Uganda and has achieved International School status as a result, which reflects how hard the school has worked to extend pupils' understanding of the wider world. As a result of this work, the school's contribution to community cohesion is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is effective and provides a wide range of learning experiences for children. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning. The class benefits from highly experienced teaching assistant support, with especially effective provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and the school has a clear set of targets for further improvement. Foremost is the further development of the recently opened outdoor area, which at present is not being used to its full potential. All safeguarding procedures are secure.

From starting points which are below those expected for their age when children start their Reception Year, they make good progress in their learning and development. Skills at the end of Reception vary widely according to the number of children on roll, but overall, outcomes are good. Children settle well at the start of the day and are ready to work. Parents speak warmly about the care their children receive and feel well informed. Staff pay close attention to the welfare and safety of each child. Children behave well and are sensitively encouraged to join in with activities if they are new to school.

Children benefit from a broad range of activities. The classroom is well equipped and is a stimulating learning environment. Observation and assessment are developing well and the 'key worker' role adopted by staff is effective in monitoring children's progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

In their response to the questionnaires, the majority of parents are positive about the school. They are particularly positive about their children's enjoyment of school and about support, care and safety. They also are of the opinion that teaching at the school is good. However, some parents expressed concern over the progress their children were making in mathematics and the fact there were three year groups in the top junior class. The inspector agreed with parents' concerns over mathematics, but was of the opinion that effective classroom management in the older class ensured that pupils in all three year groups made good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at English Bicknor Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 50 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	92	2	5	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	82	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	63	11	29	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	53	14	37	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	20	53	15	40	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	55	14	37	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	74	8	21	0	0	1	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	53	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	63	12	32	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	58	12	32	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	47	14	37	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	45	18	47	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	71	10	26	0	0	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of English Bicknor CE VC Primary School, Coleford GL16 7PG

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and finding out all about how well you are doing. Thank you for discussing your work with me. I found your comments very helpful. Thank you, too, for filling in the questionnaires, which told me how much you liked your school. You worked hard in the lessons I saw, and behaved well. I think that the school is good and that most of you are making good progress. These are the things I like most about your school.

- You are very well cared for and supported while you are at the school.
- You enjoy learning and try hard in most lessons.
- Teaching is good and teachers plan interesting lessons.
- You are good at working together and discuss sensibly the work you have to do.
- You take an active part in running school activities, like 'Wake and Shake'.
- All the pupils feel included and helped to do the best they can.

To help the school become even better, we have said that the teachers should:

- help you improve your mathematical skills, so that you will be really ready to go on to your next school
- give you plenty of opportunities to expand your imagination and learn really exciting words, so that you can write interesting stories and other kinds of writing.

Thank you again for talking to me about your school and making me welcome.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Dennett

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.